

The ANSWER of a LETTER from a FRIEND,

Concerning

ELECTIONS for the Ensuing CONVENTION.

SIR,

**T**O Answer Yours, without repeating, that the Prince, by his Circular Letters, hath recommended our Elections to all *Burgesses*, cannot be looked upon as any Infringment or Diminution of our Liberties and Priviledges; Seeing that you know, that all our Liberties and Priviledges, whither by Custome, or exprels Acts, are given to the Burgh it self, and only to its *Magistrates*, in any Case, as Representing the Burgh: But this hath been a great part of the unhappines of our late times, that what hath been allowed to the *Magistrates*, as representing, and in behalf of the Burgh, they have assumed to themselves, as their own Propertie, and thereby distinguished themselves from the Body of the *Burgesses*, as their Masters, rather then their Representors: Now it being evident that it is the Priviledge of the Burgh to chuse it's own *Magistrates*, according to the Agreement called the Set, as also to chuse and send Commissioners to Conventions and Parliaments, And it being evident, that the Burgh hath for several years been deprived of the Liberty of choosing their own *Magistrates*, by having Persons imposed upon them by Court Letters, at pleasure, and the present Set of *Magistrates* and Council, being still (whatever may be pretended of a little Formality of Freedom in the last Election) of this Court and Arbitrary Composition, what could be more just, than that since our *Magistrates* and Counsel, to whom in the Ordinary course, the Electing for Conventions and Parliaments, hath been allowed in behalf of the Burgh, are not now our *Magistrates* and Council, that is to say, of our pure and free Election, but the Courts, The Call we have got to this Convention should be directed to the Body of *Burgesses*, to whom the Priviledge of sending to Conventions is principally given, and not to our *Magistrates* and Council; since in effect they are not Ours, nor can be called our Representors: And by this, you may also understand, that seeing they ly under this just Prejudice, as not to be allowed to Elect in the Ordinary Way, they can yet far less pretend that any of them should be Elected, whatever the former use was. But the Truth is, Elections at all times ought to be free; and if any of the *Magistrates* pretend an Interest in them as a Property, it is an abuse which now they should be made to understand by a just disappointment. And to enlarge a little this Reflection, is it not the blessing of the Prince's coming that we be relieved of former imposings, and restored to our Liberties; and hath he not already,

already, for that end freed our Elections of all the Limitations of Oaths and Engagements, whereby formerly they were restrained, seeing then it is certain that it hath been by these Oaths and Engagements, that Good men hath been secluded from the *Mazistracie*, and a Knot of Men got into the Possession of it for many years, who *vix & modis*, too well known, whether in *Latine* or *English*, have appropriated it to their owne Caball, to the enriching of themselves, and ruining of the Town; what can be more reasonable and agreeable to the Mercy that God offers, then that wee should lay aside that whole Gang, and choise men uncorrupt and untainted with their Practices. And to proceed, since the *Prince* hath already set us upon the true Foot, in order to the restoring of our Liberties, and that now all *Burgesses* are equally called, as well as concerned in the Election. it is further evident that whatever course the *Magistrates*, in Possession, may lay down for keeping of Order in the manner of Electing, every *Burgess* hath an interest to inspect it; And whatever List the *Magistrates* do make of *Electors*, and in whatsoever manner, every *Burgess* may be present to remark that he may object in due time; seeing otherwise by bringing in of men that are no *Burgesses* for *Electors*, he may be deprived of all the benefit intended for him; But this is so plain from reason it self and the parity of the Act of *Parliament*, concerning the *Elections* of *Shires*, whereby all the *Electors* are ordained to make, Revise, and alter their *Lists*, that it were needless to insist on it. And therefore all *Burgesses* ought undoubtedly either to have free Access to the observing of the making of the *Lists*, or at least, the List ought to be timously published before the day of *Elections* that every man may know his *Colectors*, and be in case to Object against such as have no Interest to be there; And when both these are done, the *Electors* have still a further priviledge of demanding a pole, wherein men are not to be barely numbred, but every one to be impartially questioned and examined by Persons appointed by both sides. By which things I hope ye may rest well satisfied, that all the concern of the *Neighbours* that bestir themselves in this matter, is to assert and restore the *Liberties & Priviledges of the Burgh*, & no waye either to Violate or Usurp them. But men, who have found it their Interest in Times past to Inhance and Usurp at Pleasure may now cry out of *Faction*, and endeavour to Prepossess the weaker sort, as if these who intend to deliver the Town from their Dominion, were seeking it to themselves: But let all honest *Neighbours* in the sence of GOD'S Mercy, and the just Consideration of their own Rights and Priviledges, Examine things as they are, and concure as they ought to do: Then both you and I may be most assured, that they will find nothing intended, but the good of the *Burgh* and *Kingdom*, and the intire satisfaction of all honest Men.

Forewell.



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coll.  
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